



Learning Partnerships:

Schools, Families and Communities Working Together to Help Children Learn

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School Spotlight: Do you want your school spotlighted in the next Learning Partnerships e-newsletter? Please send your inquiries or information to info@wordinc.org.

Helpful Websites

Resources for Classroom Professionals

- 1) **Parent Involvement: Ideas for Teachers (General)** Both parents and children are busy nowadays. “It’s a balancing act for families to find time for everything. Schools can help busy families with this balancing act and help them become more involved in their children’s education.” Read these simple tips from the University of South Florida and the Florida PIRC at:
http://www.floridapartnership.usf.edu/documents/english/tipsheets/Family_Engagement/Parent%20Involvement_ENG.pdf
- 2) **Inviting Family into the Classroom (Preschool)** “[I]t is critical to remember that parents are the ‘experts’ on their own children and their presence, personally and through daily play and projects, should be viewed as a critical part of a child’s success... Here are some... ideas you can easily incorporate into your program to bring the family into the classroom—both directly and through activities that allow children to think about their families frequently throughout the day.” Read this article from Earlychildhood NEWS at:
http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=766
- 3) **Getting to Know my Child: A Guide for my Child’s Kindergarten Teacher (Elementary)** This guide helps parents through the process of sharing what they know about their child with the kindergarten teacher... It gives parents “the opportunity to pass on important information about... [their] child’s likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, and any concerns...” Access the Guide at:
http://www.getreadytoread.org/images/stories/downloads/transition/parent_resources/2_know_my_child_english.pdf
- 4) **Open House Resources (Elementary/Middle School)** “This useful list of resources will help make your Open House Night a success... These printables will give you ideas on how to plan your event, introduce yourself to parents, and foster positive parent-teacher relationships. You’ll also find helpful skill building tips to distribute to parents and great decorating ideas that showcase students’ work.” Find all these resources at TeacherVision:
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/open-house/resource/6522.html>
- 5) **In a Million Words or Fewer (Middle School)** Education World explains this easy and effective Parent “assignment” that leads to better instruction and increased understanding among students, families, and the school. Read the article at:
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev080.shtml. Read another article by a middle school teacher in *Principal Leadership* at
<http://www.principals.org/Portals/0/Content/48920.pdf>

Resources for Administration

- 6) **Strengthening Families, Strengthening Schools Toolkit (General Interest)** This Toolkit from the Annie E. Casey Foundation “includes information and resources to help schools work in partnership with families and communities – to strengthen families, strengthen schools, and help children do better. School staff and people who work for community organizations worked with the Foundation to put this tool kit together. You will find examples of schools that work in partnership with families, practical ideas for work in schools, and ideas for families about working with schools.” <http://tarc.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/sf/index.htm>
- 7) **Partnering with Families and Communities (General Interest)** This 2004 article by Joyce Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas discusses six areas of school-community

engagement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Many examples of ways to build a strong and inclusive school community are provided. Read the full article on the ASCD website at: http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el200405_epstein.pdf.

- 8) **Principals Share Lessons Learned About Communicating With Parents, Others: Communication Advice and Unique Approaches (General Interest)** Education World has gathered some different ideas to add to your parent and community involvement toolbox. The link to the second part is at the end of this article: http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin511.shtml
- 9) **Increase Parent Involvement With First Day of School Activities: Break Down Barriers with Parents Using Activities That Include Everyone (General Interest)** This article from the National Education Association suggests making the first day of school a “holiday” and provides examples of successful activities to welcome “intimidated” families. Find the article at: <http://www.nea.org/tools/14659.htm>
- 10) **Addressing Chronic Absence in Schools (Preschool/Elementary)** For some families, “involvement” might simply mean they get their children to school every day. This new website “offers a space to learn, share and discuss ideas about monitoring, understanding and addressing chronic absence, starting in kindergarten or even earlier.” Reports and articles, helpful assessment tools, and promising practices are included. Find the website at: http://www.chronicabsence.net/chronic_absence_in_the_ea/tools-for-monitoring-understanding-and-addressing-chronic-early-absence.html
- 11) **Success Tips From a Middle-School Principal (Middle School)** A list of tips that can be shared with parents, summarizing why parent involvement is still important in middle school and suggesting ways to be involved. Find this article from Scholastic at: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=2162>
- 12) **ABCs of Coping With Adolescence (High School)** “Ensuring the smooth passage to young adulthood requires parents and schools to work together in partnership.” This short article contains a list of topics that can “lead to important discussions and enhance a sense of partnership between parents and educators, educators and students, and children and parents. These topics are keyed to the academic, social, and emotional areas of concern to teens...” Find the article from the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory: http://www.temple.edu/lss/pdf/partnerships/lss_partnerships111.pdf

Research and Policy

- 13) **Research Brief: Parent Engagement in Education (General Interest)** This brief is a simple but comprehensive summary of current research and concepts in family engagement from the Indiana PIRC and the University of Indianapolis: <http://www.fscp.org/upload/newsletters/CELL%20research%20brief.pdf>
- 14) **Data Collection Instruments for Evaluating Family Involvement (General Interest)** “As evidence supporting the benefits of family involvement in learning mounts, there is an increasing demand for evaluation of family involvement initiatives and for additional research to inform practice and policy... This resource [from the Harvard Family Research Project] can help stakeholders learn about and choose rigorous family involvement instruments to assess impact and ensure quality.” Find it at: <http://www.hfrp.org/content/download/3290/96618/file/DataCollectionInstrumentsForEvaluatingFamilyInvolvement.pdf>

- 15) **Schools, Families, and Response to Intervention (General Interest)** “Despite all that has been written about family involvement, ...partnerships among educators and families are still largely an unmet national priority (Carlson & Christenson, 2005). RTI is an opportunity to bring about meaningful change in family–school relationships, allowing for the creation of engaged partnerships between educators and families through collaborative, structured problem-solving efforts.” Read more at: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/Essential/Family/ar/Schools-Families-and-Response-to-Intervention>
- 16) **Parental Influences Differ In Determining Child's Later Academic Success (Preschool)** “Mothers and fathers play different roles and make different contributions to a child’s upbringing, but a father’s influence upon a child’s academic success later in life is felt the most when he’s involved from the very beginning...” Read more from Science Daily’s summary of this study from the University of Illinois: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/08/090812111443.htm>
- 17) **Tapping Into Technology: The Role of the Internet in Family–School Communication (High School)** This 2008 study from the Harvard Family Research Project found that “the Internet represents a promising but largely untapped opportunity for promoting family–school communication... [I]t is associated with academic benefits... [and] may represent an opportunity to maintain or even increase communication between schools and families of adolescents. At the same time, the study also raises concerns about equity...” Read more at: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/tapping-into-technology-the-role-of-the-internet-in-family-school-communication>

Training and Grants

- 18) **National Parent Information Resource Center Webinars** Four webinars are being offered: 1) Transforming Schools Through Family, School, and Community Engagement, (archived); 2) A New Day: Family, School, and Community Engagement in Education Reform (archived) ; 3) Data Driven: Making Student and School Data Accessible and Meaningful to Families (held August 10th) ; and 4) The Teacher-Parent Relationship: Using Professional Development to Improve Family and Community Engagement (to be held in September). Find the archived webinars or register for an upcoming webinar at: http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement_webinars/.
- 19) **Rural Community Conference**, 8/31-9/1, Bozeman. “Neighborhoods, schools, cities and towns are bringing all kinds of people into creative community problem solving and building a future for rural Montana. This is your chance to share, learn, connect and mobilize with others dedicated to creating a thriving rural Montana. Find solutions, share success stories, adopt new tools, and leave ready to move from waiting to leading, from talk to action.” There will be break-out Sessions, national keynote speakers, panel discussions, and a community resource fair. Online registration and conference scholarships will be available. For more information, go to www.ruralcommunityconference.org or contact Betsy Webb, (406) 994-6680.
- 20) **FundsNet Online Services** is a comprehensive source of information for foundations that fund in the areas of children, youth and families, education and literacy, and many others. Access their website at: <http://www.fundsnet services.com/>
- 21) **Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy** This “grant-making program seeks to develop or expand projects designed to support the development of literacy skills for adult primary care givers and their children... Grants will be given to non-profit or public organizations that... “operate an instructional literacy program that... includes one or more of the following components: literacy for adults; parent education; pre-literacy or literacy

instruction for children pre-k to grade 3; [and] intergenerational literacy activities (Parent and Child Together Time (PACT).” Deadline for submission is September 10th. More guidelines and information can be found at:

http://www.barbarabushfoundation.com/site/c.jhLSK2PALmF/b.4425435/k.544A/Current_Funding_Opportunities.htm

- 22) **Target Field Trip Grants** This program will award five thousand \$700 grants. “Teachers can use a grant to fund a school field trip that connects their curriculum to out-of-school experiences.” Application deadline is September 30, 2010. Read more at:

<http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031880>

- 23) **UnitedHealth HEROES Grants** “Children and youth across the country have the opportunity to become ‘Health Heroes’ by learning about childhood obesity, designing programs to address it and implementing the programs in their communities. Grants of up to \$1,000 will be awarded to programs that demonstrate a clear understanding of the health risks associated with childhood obesity; propose creative solutions to fighting obesity in their schools and communities; and can be easily implemented, scaled and measured.”

Applications must be submitted online before midnight, Oct. 22, 2010.” Read more at:

www.YSA.org/HEROES

- 24) **Youth Garden Grants** The National Gardening Association and Home Depot “awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs. In evaluating grant applications, priority will be given to programs that emphasize one or more of these elements: educational focus or curricular/program integration, nutrition or plant-to-food connections, environmental awareness/education, entrepreneurship, and social aspects of gardening such as leadership development, team building, community support, or service-learning... The deadline for applying is November 1, 2010. Read more at: <http://www.kidsgardening.com/YGG.asp>

- 25) **The Heineman Foundation** “The purpose of the Heineman Foundation is to provide seed money to start-up projects and new projects within existing organizations for a maximum of three to five years.” Preference is given to organizations that have not previously been funded. Some of the “Foundation’s general areas of interest are...: programs that enable economically challenged women to enter and remain in the workplace, ...research into prevention of and treatment for childhood illnesses, programs that enable youth to think, create and communicate effectively, [and] programs that support and promote high achievement in music, science, and literature.” Montana is one of the states in which they fund. Read more at: <http://www.heinemanfoundation.org/guidelines/>

School Spotlight

Highwood School is the center of its community. It is a rural K-12 school that has a tradition of community commitment and excellence. The school emphasizes communication with families and



the community. Its website includes regular and updated postings and calendars as well as weekly and monthly newsletters. The school also places a priority on informing parents of their children’s grades and progress in school. Their five-year strategic planning process was a community endeavor, with community members and parents attending regularly alongside the staff. The principal comments in her August newsletter that “schools like ours that have a strong partnership with the community and parents are unbeatable.”

(Photo by Morgan Tyree, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mdt1960/2787643870/in/photostream/>)

Helpful Websites

Academic Development Institute: <http://www.families-schools.org/>

ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) Digest: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

Families-Schools.org: <http://www.families-schools.org/>

Harvard Family Research Project: <http://www.hfrp.org/>

Subscribe to their FREE e-newsletters from the Family Involvement Network of Educators and the Evaluation Exchange at: <http://www.hfrp.org/subscribe/>

National Network of Partnership Schools: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/center.htm>

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL):

(Search the site for parent involvement, etc.) <http://www.nwrel.org/index.php>

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL): <http://www.sedl.org/>

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